

domains, can evolve such alternative practices and beliefs, yet realize such vital results—each in our own way?

It may be said that knowledge abounds, but wisdom gleams. And between the two is something rarely studied or taught, except through embodiment: wise clinical judgment. In western medicine, a science of medical decision making and medical informatics is evolving rapidly. It soon will become a full discipline within the zone between clinical medicine and computer science. We must all welcome this new possibility, yet reserve our opinion of its place in the ancient tradition of wise clinical judgment.

I recall now the lines from W. B. Yeats's masterpiece "Leda and the Swan." As Zeus, in the guise of a great

swan, rapes Leda, the wise poet asks,

*Did she put on his knowledge with his power
Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?*¹

He does not ask about her gaining of wisdom, nor the meaning of wisdom in relation to knowledge. Yet it is just this wisdom, the infinitely subtle blending and unification of love, compassion, devoted awareness, knowledge, and a sense of justice with mercy that is so at the heart of humanistic medicine, eastern or western.

REFERENCE

1. Yeats WB: The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats. New York, NY, Macmillan, 1963, p 211

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CONSTELLATION CAT

(A Migraine Aura)

The constellation cat
slinks along the visionfield
unbidden. Settles in, stretches out;
an omen.

The feline blackness deepens
as the starry outline brightens.
The comet-tail swishes,
white lights dancing.

Crouching now, energized,
he leaps high, falls
in a brilliant ball
spinning.

Mid the whirling orb
a black hole waxes;
swallows the lights,
puts out the cat.

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WHERE GALLINULES MEW

It seemed robust, that pine,
its needles silver in the sun
as if still wet with dew. You never knew
it hid on its eastern face a blotch
of browning cones. Your disease was quick,
your healthy mind no curb to cells
that raced like a street gang,
wild to execute a contract.
You were gone a year when two trucks
rumbled over the fairway with men
and chain saws. From your chair
on the deck I watched the young men
climb the tree, felt the quiver
of its brittle limbs at the bite
of the blade.

Now, as I round the pond by the cattails
where gallinules mew like kittens and bull-
frogs play ventriloquist, I am stunned
by the sight of the stump they left.
Still as a willow when the wind dies
I remember how it was with you and me.

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